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Feeling Frosty



Fenwick Flossie says hello to the children who came to see her and hear her prediction for the remainder of winter on Groundhog Day at Centennial Park.

LAURA BARTON/POSTMEDIA NETWORK



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LOCAL NEWS



WAYNE CAMPBELL/SPECIAL TO POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Niagara Regional Police and Niagara Catholic District School Board signed a revised protocol of co-operation at Tuesday's regular school board meeting. From left are: school resource officers Const. David Marynuik and Const. David Thiessen, Chief Jeff McGuire, education director John Crocco, board chair Rev. Paul MacNeil, and education superintendent Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells.

Cops in schools paying big dividends

WAYNE CAMPBELL

Special to Postmedia Network

Police Chief Jeff McGuire is "a huge fan" of the school resource officers program.

It not only allows police officers and young people to talk in a casual atmosphere, it affects the resource officers themselves.

"They are better cops when they come out of it," McGuire told Niagara Catholic District School Board last Tuesday night.

There are six Niagara Regional Police officers working in schools. They are contacts for the police service, students, staff and parents. A couple of officers have even coached high school teams. McGuire said the program

aids both police work and community relations. "I have seen it make a difference."

The police officers volunteer to work with young people, the chief said.

"They are not just assigned to the job."

Const. David Thiessen, a school resource officer since the program began, said it allows young people to talk with police in an unofficial setting. They get to know officers as people.

"Lots of positive things happen," he said. "You look forward to going to work every day. You see problems solved and resolved."

Const. David Marynuik, a school resource officer for St. Catharines, said in his 28

years in policing he has not seen a more beneficial program.

"It is not just what happens today in schools, but what the kids do in the future."

The NRP has signed a revised protocol with the Catholic school board to reflect Ministry of Education updates to its provincial model for the program.

Education superintendent Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells said the revisions include: bomb threat and lockdown procedures; school and police roles in violence-prevention strategies; and, threat awareness and management services.

Niagara Catholic students, she said, have benefited from three programs in which school resource officers

organized and participated: Students Rock a guitar competition; Camp Medeba leadership training; and Inter-board Film Fest, to create public service videos.

Education director John Crocco called the school resource officer program a strong partnership that allows officers to become part of the daily lives of students. It is well worth the financial support the board gives it.

St. Catharines Trustee Maurice Charbonneau, a retired high school principal, said he spent a lot of time trying to get the program off the ground and faced a lot of resistance.

Now, he said, having officers in the school is paying big dividends for students and the community.

Pelham's 2017 operating costs up 4.69 per cent

WAYNE CAMPBELL

Special to Postmedia Network

Pelham taxpayers will see a 4.69 per cent increase in the cost of running their municipality in 2017.

That equates to \$518,542.

For a homeowner with an average residential assessment of \$316,400, it will mean a Pelham-only tax increase of \$69.60, said treasurer Carl Pupo.

The hike does not take into account Niagara Region and school taxes, which make up more than 60 per cent of the blended residential tax bill. Regional and provincial figures usually arrive by April, she said.

The treasurer outlined Pelham's \$11.8-million operating budget at a special committee-of-the-whole meeting last Monday night.

The committee

recommended its approval by council last Monday.

Chief administrative officer Darren Ottaway called it "a progressive budget" that is growth-related while maintaining services.

He referred to the 2017 operating budget as "lean."

Among expenditure increases this year: three new staff along with other staff compensation adjustments and health benefit increases totalling \$365,798; \$33,515 in utility cost increases; and \$28,000 for increased Maple Acre library branch hours.

Over the past five years, Pelham's operating-budget increase averaged 3.88 per cent per year. The low came in 2014 at 1.49 per cent. The high was last year at 7.86 per cent because of borrowing for the town's new community centre and arena.



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St. Catharines

LOCAL NEWS

Niagara weighed down by obesity

GRANT LAFLECHE
Postmedia Network

The data is new, but it confirmed something Dr. Val Jaeger has long suspected.

Niagara isn't exactly the healthiest community in the country and is being weighed down, in nearly every age demographic, by obesity.

While the conclusion is not new, for the first time Jaeger has the data that shows from the very young to senior citizens, Niagara residents are concerned about being overweight, and their habits and visits to hospitals bear out those concerns.

"Having it there in black and white is certainly very useful," said Jaeger, speaking about the Life Course report she presented at the Niagara Region public health and social services committee meeting last week. "It is going to allow us to show our program delivery in a way we couldn't before because we now have the data."

Jaeger said public health initiatives are generally program focused, but there often isn't robust data to shape those programs on a local level.

For instance, she pointed to the community dental program Niagara's public health department runs. It

is an excellent and effective program, she said, but it was driven by a provincial initiative using province-wide data.

"So we were the ones who had to dig down and find out where the program was needed, who needed it, etcetera," she said.

So Life Course was an effort to get a clearer picture of the health of Niagara, using Niagara specific information, that could be used to guide the public health department's efforts in the future.

It took two years of health department staff working every week to pull the relevant data together.

"The information was out there, but you had to go looking for it. It certainly wasn't in any one place before," Jaeger said.

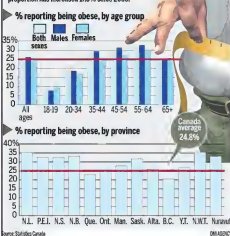
The report, presented to the committee last Tuesday, looks at hospitals visits in Niagara, why patients self-presented to a hospital, why they called for an ambulance, what they were treated for and the patient's age.

The report pulls together data from 2011 to 2015.

The report shows that for four significant age demographics — 12-19, 19-44, 45-64 and 65 and up — the number on self-report condition by patients was being overweight and obese.

We're getting fatter

One in four adult Canadians are obese, according to a new report from Statistics Canada. And that proportion has increased 17.5% since 2003.



Jaeger said a closer look at the data reveals why this is and the health care consequences.

Looking at the top five self-reported behaviors in Niagara in those age groups, the report shows people report not eating enough fruits and vegetables, drinking too much and being inactive during their leisure time.

Smoking and "illicit drugs" also cracked the top

five for all age groups.

Those behaviours will contribute to being overweight or obese, said Jaeger. But being too heavy also carries with it measurable impacts.

Jaeger points to the top five hospital discharges listed in the report across all age groups.

For age groups 45 to 64 up to 75 to 84, Jaeger said she noticed "arthritis" was

listed in the top five.

"At first I thought, 'what does that mean.' I know what word means, of course. I was curious to why it was listed in all those age groups being diagnosed for it," she said. Arthritis is joint pain caused by the wearing down of cartilage in the joints.

There are multiple causes of arthritis and is a common condition as people age, but Jaeger said it is also common in people who are overweight.

Arthritis was not nearly as common 50 or 60 years ago, she said, when obesity was not a public health crisis.

Heart disease and other conditions connected with being overweight or obese were also on that list.

Jaeger also noted that a significant reason younger people, aged 18 through 44, were brought to a hospital by ambulance was for a psychiatric condition.

Jaeger said the data will allow public health to target specific issues in the region and start to figure which Niagara communities need the most help.

"I don't think you will see a change in the programs we are already delivering," she said. "We will still have our staff people doing those programs. But I think what you will eventually see is more fluidity in terms of new pro-

grams as we are able to target specific issues."

The Life Course report will also help the region when it comes to lobbying the provincial government for health care funding, said Niagara Region chair Alan Caslin. Much like the GO Transit file, where the region brought a robust, data driven case to Queen's Park to prove the need for GO Trains in Niagara.

"You are able to make a much more compelling case when you have the data laid out like this," Caslin said. "We are going to be able to bring this to the LHIN (the Local Health Integration Network which funds health care in Niagara) and really demonstrate the need in a way we haven't been able to before."

Caslin said the report will also help build Niagara's case for other projects, including the bid for the 2020 Canada Day Games.

If the games came to Niagara, sports facilities will need to be built or upgraded, and Caslin said part of the bid will be about the legacy of those facilities.

He said the Life Course report shows Niagara's need for improved venues that can be used by the community after the games, and that can encourage parents and children to be more active.

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e-mail: welland.tribune@postmedia.ca
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Jay Allyn, ADVERTISING MANAGER
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DSBN survey on potential park revision



DAVE
AUGUSTYN

Last week, residents in the Cherry Ridge subdivision in Fenwick received a survey and draft plan from the District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) about potential changes to Cherry Ridge Park.

As you know, the DSBN is in the process of consolidating the former Pelham Centre School (Grades 4 to 8) and E.W. Farr Memorial School (Grades K to 3) to create one, Grades K to 8 school at the E.W. Farr site. The consoli-

dation required classroom additions and renovations including a new gymnasium, a learning commons, parking and bus drop off. This construction is well underway and the board hopes to open the renovated school this September.

With this expansion, the school's soccer field was eliminated. In an effort to provide a soccer field for students the board approached the town last year to enter into a community partnership. They proposed building a soccer field partially on school board property and partially on the public park lands.

Councillors considered this possibility in a report to the June 6, 2016 Committee of the Whole meeting and, on June 20, council approved the authorization of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the town and the DSBN to negotiate an appropriate agreement.

As part of these negotiations, the DSBN proposed a draft redesign for the park and their lands late last Fall.

At the request from the town, the board sent a letter and a survey to immediate neighbours and other Cherry Ridge residents last week.

Why is the DSBN is only surveying Cherry Ridge residents? When the subdivision was first developed in the 1990s, the developer paid the town "parkland dedication" fees and provided land for this neighbourhood park. And, when the town initially designed and built the park around 2008, we only involved residents from that subdivision. We follow this approach in designing and redesigning other neighbourhood parks too.

The feedback on the design, a final proposed design, insurance and legal considerations, and any other items will form part of the potential final agreement. Just like any and all

agreements between the town and other corporations, council will publicly consider the factors and the potential agreement during one of our meetings. DSBN trustees would also have to consider such an agreement.

Finally, if approved, this would not be the first time for such a joint use agreement between a city or town and the DSBN. Others with agreements with the DSBN include St. Catharines (shared park agreement), Welland (shared library), and Fort Erie (shared library and theatre).

Councillors and I will be interested in feedback when a proposed agreement comes to an upcoming council meeting.

You may contact Mayor Dave at mayordave@pelham.ca or review documents and read past columns at www.pelhammayordave.blogspot.ca.

Valentine's pairings of wine and chocolate



BOB
TYMCZYSZYN
NIAGARA UNCORKED

Feb. 14 is just around the corner, and even though its significance will always be the day that Alexander Graham Bell and Eliza Gray filed patent applications for the telephone, or that YouTube, was founded on that date in 2005, for most of us the 14th will always be Valentine's Day.

It's a day when as kids we exchanged valentines, and as adults we buy chocolates and flowers and sappy cards.

The origins of Valentine's Day are a bit murky, with most associating with the commemoration of St. Valentine of Terni, martyred on the 14th in the year 278.

The date didn't have romantic connotations until the 14th century when English poet Chaucer wrote *The Parliament of Fowls*, in which he pens that birds get together to find their mate and it happens on St. Valentine's Day.

Fast-forward several centuries, and here we are.

Cupids and hearts adorn store shelves, a card is a must and chocolate and roses a necessary extravagance.

But there's nothing better than spending a romantic dinner with your significant other. My friends at Fielding Estate Winery in



BOB TYMCZYSZYN/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

This selection of Niagara wines is perfect for a Valentine's Day dinner: Fielding Estate Winery Sparkling Rose, Pelham Estates Private Reserve 2014 Vidal Icewine, and Henry of Pelham Speck Family Reserve Pinot Noir 2010.

Beamsville came up with a couple of suggestions for people with a sweet tooth.

"White chocolate is very sweet, so you want to make sure to pair it with a sweeter wine, oth-

erwise the wine will taste tart and bitter," said Emily Rablin.

She recommended Fielding's 2014 Riesling, fruit forward with a touch of residual sweetness, along with a rich mouth-feel and lengthy finish.

"I think a fruity Chardonnay or Moscato will also go well. Or an Icewine that will match the buttery sweetness of the white chocolate. Just like tasting wines, we go from light to dark. Milk chocolate contains lots of sugars."

"My first pick would be sparkling wine with chocolate-covered strawberries," said Heidi Fielding.

"There's nothing better than starting off a nice romantic meal with bubbles."

Rablin explained that dark chocolate is not nearly as sweet and can be quite bitter, therefore it should be paired with a rich and full-bodied red wine.

"The wine should still have a ripe and luscious fruit character and shouldn't be overly tannic," she said.

I sampled both the traditional method Brut and Rose sparklings.

While both delightful, the pale colour of the Rose draws my attention for this "holiday."

The bubbles are lively, dancing gently on the tongue. Made mostly from Pinot Noir grapes along with Chardonnay, on the nose it has a slight tartness, and its elegance makes it very easy on the palate.

Absolutely delightful, and pairing it with chocolate-covered strawberries will be the pique de résistance.

Priced at just under \$30 a bottle, there's plenty of time to pick one up at the winery.

Pelham Transit service to continue

WAYNE CAMPBELL

Special to Postmedia Network

Pelham Transit will continue to roll past its pilot project deadline of March 31.

Last Monday town council agreed to spend \$83,920 this year to continue the one 16-seat bus service.

Councillors recommended an \$11.6-million town operating budget at a special committee-of-the-whole meeting last Monday.

It went to the regular meeting of council on Monday for approval.

Chief administrative officer Darren Outaway called "the little transit that could" service a major expansion in the budget.

Pelham Transit began in May 2015 with a \$100,000 grant from the Ontario Ministry of Transportation as a pilot project for a rural area.

The grant ends March 31.

Pelham's contribution, however, will draw an Ontario gas tax grant for transit, said

treasurer Carl Pupo.

Recreation director Vickie van Ravenswaay said monthly ridership has doubled in the past year to 232 riders a month.

She said the key factor is building trust.

"You have to make sure you're going to be there," she said, adding people want a service they can rely on to get them to their destination every time.

"We are at the point where trust is there and we're seeing growth."

Students from Niagara College and Brock University use the bus along with seniors, people with disabilities and those without other transportation.

The bus begins in North Pelham, loops through Fenwick, goes along Canboro Road through Ridgeville, through Fonthill and on to the college and Seaway Mall in Welland. It connects there with Welland Transit and Niagara Regional Transit.

Users would like to see another run along with existing afternoon appointment service in town, van Ravenswaay said.

It has become a factor in economic development, said Ward 3 Coun. Peter Papp.

"Transit attracts people." Pelham Transit is talking to Winfield about expanding into the township and has mentioned the idea to West Lincoln.

Ward 3 Coun. John Durley called approaches to Winfield and West Lincoln "baby steps in the right direction" to a badly needed regional transit system.

Mayor Dave Augustyn said transit is like parks, roads and snow removal: "They don't bring in much revenue" but are significant community services.

GREG FURMINGER/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Pelham Transit will outlast its pilot run, say councillors, who voted to continue funding the one-bus operation.



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Psychiatrist stripped of licence, reprimanded

GRANT LAFLECHE
Postmedia Network

A former St. Catharines psychiatrist has been stripped of his medical licence by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario for what the college deemed was "sexual abuse" of a patient.

On Jan. 16, the college revoked Dr. Michael Porter of his licence at a reprimand hearing into Toronto.

The revocation of Porter's licence was ordered in September 2016 and the formal reprimand

was enacted at the hearing this month. Porter was disciplined after repeatedly hugging a patient in a manner that, in the view of the college, "went beyond purported therapeutic hugs."

"The committee accepted that the hugs were tender and mutually satisfying, reflecting an enjoyable, romantic gesture," says an earlier February 2016 decision. "This, in the committee's view accords with the meaning of 'sexual nature,' in the legislation. These hugs were wrong especially in the psycho-

therapy context and in the committee's view, constitute sexual abuse."

Porter could not be reached for comment and he did not attend the January hearing. He is not facing any criminal charges.

In the text of the January reprimand provided by college spokeswoman Tracey Sobers, the college said it was "dismayed and profoundly disappointed" in Porter.

"You have failed to grasp the most fundamental tenet of the profession—that the practice of med-

icine is about serving the needs of the patient, not your own," the reprimand reads. "The committee is of the firm opinion that no penalty short of revocation could adequately protect the public while expressing the censure of the profession."

The college summary of the case says that Porter was treating a woman, identified only as Patient A, from 2008 to 2011.

"Patient A testified that Dr. Porter first hugged her about a year and a half after [she] started seeing him, when she was dwelling on the death of her relative. She thought Dr. Porter felt bad for her because her relative had passed away and so he said 'Here, let me give you a hug.' After that, she said they would hug just before she left," reads the decision.

The college said due to a past disciplinary decision against Porter, he was required to have all of his patient sessions recorded by a video camera and the footage "preserved for inspection."

"The hugs which were captured on video were initiated by Dr. Porter by standing and holding his arms open, welcoming Patient A to the embrace. Dr. Porter would generally stand in an area or move to behind his chair where the video was unlikely to fully capture the hug," the decision says.

Patient A further testified that eventually she and Porter would say "I love you," after a hug and on at least three occasions, she said Porter kissed her.

The decision says Porter denies any kissing happened.

"The committee carefully reviewed the evidence available

and considered the credibility of both Patient A and Dr. Porter. The committee found that Dr. Porter kissed Patient A, that he held her hand in the hallway of his office, and that she sat on his lap in his office on one or more occasions," the decision reads.

The patient also testified that Porter made sexual comments to her. Porter denied he made such comment, the decision reads, but the college accepted the patient's testimony to be accurate.

The college further says it found that Porter disclosed to Patient A inappropriate information about his own personal life and information about two other patients. It also found he did not preserve all the video of his patient interactions as previously ordered by the college.

In its January reprimand, the college said Porter had caused Patient A harm and "it is through no restraint on your part that it did not continue and worsen."

"You have shattered her trust, not only in you, but in the profession as a whole and, further, in those who would attempt to her in the future."

"While you are not present to hear our condemnation, the committee has no doubt that it will be conveyed to you and, perhaps even more important, to your victim or victims, to the profession and to the public whose trust you betrayed."

The full college decision can be found at www.cpsso.on.ca/public-register/doctor-details.aspx?view=&id=%2050683.

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ALISON LANGLEY
Postmedia Network

While his client admitted he used two sets of fake IDs to try to get his hands on two iPhones, a lawyer claimed the 46-year-old man is not a criminal.

"He is not a sophisticated man. He is not a criminal. He's somebody who got involved in a criminal enterprise out of desperation," the lawyer told Judge Ann Watson after Carlo Visani pleaded guilty last Wednesday to several fraud-related offences in an Ontario Court of Justice in St. Catharines.

Court heard Visani went to a Rogers store in Niagara Falls in August 2016 and used a fake driver's licence and social insurance card to try to get a new iPhone 6.

The employee, however, recognized Visani as the subject of a fraud alert that had been issued by head office.

Later that same day, Visani went to another Rogers outlet, this time in Welland, and attempted to pull the same scam.

The clerk at that store also recognized him.

Court heard Visani, who had never been involved in the law in the past, was "low on the totem pole" in the criminal enterprise and was not involved in the manufacturing of the phony identification.

While the judge agreed Visani may have played a minor role in the scam, he was still culpable and imposed a 27-day jail term to be served on weekends.

Fake IDs result in month in jail



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- 11am-1pm** **Free Public Skate** Courtesy of Family and Children's Services
- 12pm-2pm** **Community Expo:** learn about your community's unique services
- 12-12:30pm** **Children's Snowshoe Races:** held with or without snow
- 1pm-2pm** **Golden Boot Hockey Game:** Pelham Volunteer Firefighters vs. Pelham Minor Hockey Coaches
- 2pm-3pm** **Free Public Skate with Pelham Panthers Meet & Greet** Courtesy of the Town
- 6pm** **Free Jr. B Game:** Pelham Panthers vs. Buffalo Regals

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<p>MEMORABLE MONDAY</p> <p>March 13</p> <p>We start this jam packed day with awesome "got to know you" games and fun indoor and outdoor activities are planned today with skating after lunch. Please bring skates and mittens - helmet is recommended!</p> <p>An afternoon filled with fun-filled physical activities and crafts will conclude our first day at camp.</p> <p>Lunch today with the meal plan! Nature's Corner chicken quesadilla or grilled chicken with lettuce and drink</p>	<p>TERRIFIC TUESDAY</p> <p>March 14</p> <p>Campers are excited to visit Heartland Forest in Niagara Falls - a nature experience dedicated to preservation and education. Campers will participate in scavenger hunts, go on a guided forest trail hike and rock. Insectmagnets over a campfire. Upon our return, we will receive a treat from our host and instructor, Matthew Turvey who whose work on the television show Adventure Time has been successful.</p> <p>Lunch today with the meal plan! Subway sub, cookie and a drink.</p>	<p>WOW WEDNESDAY</p> <p>March 15</p> <p>Today we will be filled with activities including just dance and outdoor activities.</p> <p>Mad Science will visit in the morning and skating will take place in the afternoon so please bring skates and mittens - helmet is recommended. Small team obstacle course races are planned following skating.</p> <p>Lunch today with the meal plan! Nature's Corner macaroni and cheese bowl with apple and drink.</p>	<p>TRENDING THURSDAY</p> <p>March 16</p> <p>Today we will be traveling to the magical world of Disney! We will start with some outdoor activities including snowshoeing and Disney-themed crafts to get us ready for the afternoon. After lunch, we will board the bus for a trip to Disney's "Transport to Adventure" a hilarious adventure following everyone's favourite characters around the world.</p> <p>Lunch today with the meal plan! McDonald's hamburger or chicken snack wrap, apple, fries, drink and a snack.</p>	<p>FUNSTASTIC FRIDAY</p> <p>March 17</p> <p>Join us for the final day of March Break camp for 2017! Today we will be celebrating St. Patrick's Day with some awesome crafts and outdoor fun with Brook Recreation and Leisure students! Campers will have one more fun-filled skating session followed by some energetic, dynamic indoor activities.</p> <p>Lunch today with the meal plan! Moosie's pizza, snack and a drink.</p>
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WINTER PARKING REGULATIONS IN EFFECT

Coldest Night event set for end of month

MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Postmedia Network

Wellanders will walk together during the Coldest Night of the year event Saturday Feb. 25.

Open Arms Mission is hosting the two, five and 10 kilometre walk which starts at the Welland Community Wellness Centre on Lincoln Street. The fundraiser event aims to raise money to support services offered at the Mission. The organization supports vulnerable people in the community. Some services offered include a hot meal every Saturday, a food bank and a hygiene bank.

Last year the organization raised almost \$14,000. This year, Jeff Aitken, Mission pastor, said organizers hope to raise about \$20,000 and anticipate about 200 walkers.

Aitken said in the last year he has seen an increase in the number of people who utilize the organization's services. With the increase in cli-



**WELLAND MAYOR
FRANK CAMPION**

ents money raised is essential to the success of the organization.

Aitken said personally he attributes the increase in homelessness to the high cost of housing and rentals. He said there is also a need for more emergency shelters in the region. There are many who suffer with mental health issues, from depression to addiction. Aitken said when there isn't community sup-

port those people don't get adequate help.

Welland mayor Frank Campion, who is participating in the Coldest Night of the year for the first time, said there are a great deal of factors that affect homelessness.

"It (Welland) is a growing municipality and it's an issue a growing municipality has. We see the price of housing going up and the price of rent rising, cost of living is going up. All these things combined make it very difficult for people to survive," Campion said.

What makes the Coldest Night unique is many of the clients of Open Arms Mission volunteer during the event. Aitken said it creates a great atmosphere where there is no "us and them." Campion agreed saying there are no "walls or barriers" and everyone is working for the same goal to assist others.

"Everybody counts ... we all have needs and we need to make sure they are taken care of," Campion said.



TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

Open Arms Mission manager Jeff Aitken tries to keep warm during a blustery winter day in this file photo from last year's Coldest Night of the Year fundraising walk.



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NIAGARA 2041

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Niagara Region is making sure we're prepared for this growth through four projects that will help us plan where and how that growth will occur, and how it will be accommodated. This Public Information Centre will focus on one of the four projects.



HOW WE GO:

The Transportation Master Plan will look at how we currently travel in and around Niagara and how we can improve our transportation systems, including options for walking, cycling and public transit, to better serve Niagara's future needs.

Get involved:

The Transportation Master Plan is nearing completion. Since the last PICs held in November/December of 2016, the Project Team has developed preliminary recommendations for Niagara Region's transportation system. Find out how the transportation system is being improved and what benefits there are to the networks (walking, cycling, transit, road), to economic efficiency and to the overall transportation experience.

Residents are invited to attend a Public Information Centre in their community to learn more about these recommendations and to have your voice heard.

Feb. 21, 2017

Welland
Civic Square Community Room
60 East Main St.
5:30 - 8 p.m.
Presentation at 6:30 p.m.

Feb. 22, 2017

St. Catharines
Kiwanis Aquatics Centre
Irene Locke Program Room
425 Carlton St.
5:30 - 8 p.m.
Presentation at 6:30 p.m.

March 1, 2017

Grimsby
Town Hall Council Chambers
160 Livingston Ave.
5:30 - 8 p.m.
Presentation at 6:30 p.m.

March 2, 2017

Niagara Falls
Gale Centre Memorial Room
5152 Thorold Stone Rd.
5:30 - 8 p.m.
Presentation at 6:30 p.m.

If you require any accommodations for a disability in order to access the project documents, contact the Accessibility Advisory Coordinator at 905-980-6000 ext. 3252 or 1-800-263-7215 or accessibility@niagararegion.ca to make the appropriate arrangements.

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LOCAL NEWS

IN BRIEF

The Great Backyard Bird Count begins 20th year

The four-day birdwatching event begins later this month and asks people to document the birds they see.

Birdwatchers are asked to take 15 minutes out of their day from Feb. 17 to 20 to count and fill out a checklist of the birds they recognize. The location doesn't matter, as long as it's somewhere birds are typically found. Last year, birdwatchers from 100 countries submitted 162,052 checklists, which

amounted to 5,689 bird species.

The GBBC is a project by Bird Studies Canada, Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Birdwatchers are asked to enter their checklists at birdcount.org, where more information about the GBBC can also be found.

Kinnettes fundraiser about pampering

The third annual Kinnettes Pamper Me Sweet event will take place Saturday at Fonthill United Church.

The fundraiser will feature about 35 vendors selling goods such as soaps and cosmetics. Each year the Fonthill Kinnettes choose a cause they feel is important to support. This year event chairs Betty Twomey and Loba Brown, along with other members, decided to support Fonthill

resident Faith Flagg and The Hope Centre in Welland. Twomey said they wanted to help Flagg because she was hit by a vehicle when she was walking home two years ago.

Flagg has medical costs and is still recovering from the incident. Twomey said she hopes to raise awareness about drunk driving during the event as well. The event, which

runs 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., will have a \$2 fee this year. Instead of paying \$2 people can opt to donate nonperishable food which will be donated to The Hope Centre.

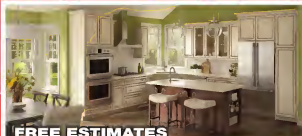
Twomey said there will be a penny sale and treats served at the tea room. There will also be tea readers and psychics at the event for people interested in knowing their futures.

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Memorable send-off for special constable

BILL SAWCHUK
Postmedia Network

For years, Special Constable Rick Gordon has worked make sure civilian members of the Niagara Regional Police Service had a voice.

The court escort supervisor retired after a 30-year career at the end of January — but he is leaving with more than the best wishes of friends and colleagues.

Gordon is this year's recipient of a prestigious provincial award, The John Walker Award, given out by the Police Association of Ontario, recognizes police association members whose actions exemplify leadership, devotion and sacrifice in the face of adversity. He will receive the award in May.

Gordon, a St. Catharines native, is sharing the award with Orangeville police Const. James Giovannetti, an advocate for improved responses to post-traumatic stress disorder within the policing workplace. It is the first time the award has been shared.

Cliff Priest, president of the Niagara Region Police Association, said the civilian members Gordon represented are an "integral part of the working machine that is modern policing."

"They are often unseen, but it is like a jigsaw puzzle," he said. "If you take one piece out, we can't function."

"They are people like our dispatchers that provide the information that gets us to the calls. They are our CPIC (Canadian Police Information Centre) operators that give us the background we need when we are heading to a call, such as whether the person has a history of violence toward the police or mental health issues."

Story continued on Page 15



RIK GORDON

Police headquarters building in St. Catharines sold

KAREN WALTERS
Postmedia Network

The former Niagara Regional Police headquarters in downtown St. Catharines is slated to be re-born as a technology hub.

The building at 110 James St. has been sold by Niagara Region to Clickback, a company currently located down the street.

"Our goal is to get some like-minded companies into the building and we're looking to fill it as we move along," Clickback CEO Kyle Tkachuk said last Thursday.

"Being tenant-owner, we needed a home as well for our company to grow into and I think it's going to be a great home. We're all excited about it."

Clickback is a cloud-based software company that provides lead generation software products to companies around North America.

It was founded by St. Catharines-born Tkachuk in 2000 and has 30 employees with the goal to be at 60 in the upcoming year.

The deal with the Region doesn't close until mid-March but Tkachuk said the concept is to turn the building into a technological or innovation hub for Clickback and other established tech companies or new start-ups.

He said other high-rise buildings in the downtown tend to be financial or legal business services so they'll be bringing some tech flair to the core.

The six-storey office building on the corner of James and Church streets was constructed in 1974. A Niagara Regional Police housed its headquarters there from 2005 until September 2016, when the service opened its new \$65-million building on Valley View in Niagara Falls.

The Region declared the 3,782-square-metre building



JULIE JOCSAN / POSTMEDIA NETWORK

110 James Street, the former home of the headquarters for the Niagara Regional Police, has been sold. Photo taken on Thursday, January 26, 2017.

surplus in June prior to the big move. It had an asking price of \$1,995,000 according to an eight-page brochure about the property put out by Colliers International.

Mayor Walter Szendzik lauded the sale in his state of the city address last Thursday at Meridian Centre. He said afterwards "the city will work with the company to help it build the tech hub."

"We want to fill that building with tech-focused companies, whatever field they're in. That'll be the drivers of the next wave of investment into the community," Szendzik said.

When Niagara Regional Police chose to move out of downtown St. Catharines and re-locate to Niagara Falls, it was seen as an obstacle for the core. Szendzik said Clickback moving into the building is a great example of an opportunity that's presenting itself in a positive way.

"It's a best-case scenario. We've got a homegrown business success who's now laying down even further roots in the community to really be a part of the revitalization of downtown

St. Catharines."

Tkachuk said the company, which could be based anywhere because of the nature of the business, has been downtown since 2007. It wanted to stay downtown when looking for a new location after seeing a lot of great things happen there.

"We would have felt bad leaving now when so much positive has come to the downtown core with the Meridian Centre, with the performing arts centre, the cleanup and revitalization of St. Paul Street, just a lot of great things going on," he said.

"Our team and our staff have seen that, enjoy it and want to remain downtown."

Tkachuk was attracted to the former police building because of the architecture, which he said is innovative in its own way with floors that angle out rather than being a perfectly square facade.

The company hopes to move in at the end of May or early June after doing some renovations. Tkachuk said the company has already talked to potential tenants who are keen on the plan for the building and thinks it won't have a problem filling it.

FROM PAGE 14

"They play vital roles. Without civilian members, we would have to increase our officers by 50 per cent to cover the duties."

There are about 350 civilian members of Niagara Regional Police who work alongside the service's 750 sworn officers.

Gordon began his career with the Niagara Regional Police in the licensing bureau and almost immediately took a leadership role with the police association, the union which represents Niagara's rank-and-file officers and civilian staff.

"That he has made a difference for civilian and all mem-

bers cannot be exaggerated," said Leanne McClay, the association's CAO and general counsel, who wrote the letter nominating Gordon for the award. "He truly did, and he did so with a passion that was evident in both word and deed."

During his tenure with the association, he helped form the National Association of Police Professionals and worked to get a civilian director's seat on the Canadian Police Association.

Gordon then sat as the Ontario appointee to the Canadian association for two terms.

As chair of the Niagara association's occupational health

and safety committee, he was involved in a battle that ended up with the Ontario Labour Board and resulted in ballistic barriers for front desk civilian and uniform personnel.

It is something he was still fighting for as he retired. The association believes the protection is lacking at the new Niagara Regional Police headquarters in Niagara Falls.

"In his entire association career, Rick has never shied away from adversity, but has risen to the representational challenge that it presents," McClay said. "He has served all of the members, local, provincial and federally with commitment, dedication and true leadership."

Rocket launcher seized at border crossing

ALISON LANGLEY
Postmedia Network

A rocket launcher and two grenades seized at the Peace Bridge last summer were just a few of the thousands of items confiscated by border officials in 2016.

The Canada Border Services Agency last week released its 2016 year in review, which said more than 10.5 million cars, 52,000 buses and 3.3 million commercial trucks were processed by border officers in the Southern Ontario Region.

The Southern Ontario Region covers the cities of Niagara Falls, Fort Erie, Windsor, Sarnia, and

London, and surrounding communities.

All told, the CBSA processed more than 25 million travellers entering southern Ontario in 2016. Officers conducted more than 173,000 examinations which resulted in:

- 1,383 drug seizures, including 68 kg of cocaine;
- 218 firearms and 868 prohibited weapons seized;
- 4,066 litres of alcohol and 201 tobacco seizures;
- 13 child porn seizures; and
- 10 proceeds of crime seizures valued at \$373,000.

The disposable rocket launcher and two grenades

were seized July 3 after agents checked the items inside the vehicle of two Louisiana residents. The men did not have any documentation stating the launcher was deactivated and the grenades inert.

Niagara Regional Police were called in to assist and an investigation determined the items were unlawful.

The items were seized and the men were allowed to proceed into Canada.

Other unusual seizures made last year included a woolly mammoth tusk discovered in a vehicle at a Windsor border crossing.



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Eli & The Straw Man take aim at Huntington's Disease



JOHN LAW
Postmedia Network

By day, Tamara Maluri researches Huntington's Disease at McMaster University. By night, she tries eradicating it with her Niagara band Eli &

Niagara band Eli & The Straw Man plays a Huntington Society of Canada fundraiser at the Seneca Queen Theatre in Niagara Falls Feb. 11.

The Straw Man. After hitting the road last year for a series of fundraising shows raising awareness about the fatal hereditary disease, the band is back at it on their home turf Saturday at the Seneca Queen Theatre in Niagara Falls.

It's a disease Maluri describes as like having Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and schizophrenia all at once.

"Because my mom has it, I have a 50 per cent chance of

inheriting it," says Maluri, the band's trumpet player and percussionist. "It's something that everyone in every HD family deals with, and everyone deals with it differently."

She deals with it musically. Formed in late 2014, Eli & The Straw Man has Maluri and her husband Eli joined by seasoned Niagara musicians TJ Rogers, Nathaniel Gould, Phil Bosley and James Gizzie.

"Playing is great fun — we'll play anytime — but it's nice

to have a connection with the people in the audience."

The band recently recorded its debut album, to be released in the spring.

The Seneca Queen fundraiser, hosted by local musician Aaron Berger, will feature Niagara singer Whitney Pea and include a silent auction.

Despite the serious undertones to the evening, Maluri says music is the perfect ice-breaker.

"People usually feel good when they watch music (live), so it's not hard," she says. "You get up there, have fun, and you can tell from the crowd it's a good time."

"I recently went to a Huntington Society conference in Halifax, and it's a serious matter, but everybody I met there was super positive. I was wondering why, and it occurred to me that only the most positive people are actually going to go to a conference about it."

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LOCAL NEWS

Six more weeks of winter, says Fenwick Flossie

LAURA BARTON
Postmedia Network

Fenwick's furry weather prognosticator took in her surroundings and then headed back into her burrow after she spotted her shadow.

Looks like it's six more weeks of winter.

It was a chilly morning at Centennial Park last Thursday, but still many children gathered to see Fenwick Flossie, who did come back out to visit with some encouragement. Children had been chanting her name almost as soon as they got off buses and gathered around her home.

Children from Pelham's E.W. Farr Memorial Public School, St. Anna Catholic Elementary School and Fonthill Montessori Preschool as well as Welland's St. Andrew Catholic Elementary School poured into the park.

laurabarton@postmedia.com
Twitter: @LaurabartonBarton

St. Andrew principal Carla Bianco said it's a great community event.

"It's an outdoor lesson," she said, noting students learn about weather and the environment in class. "It's an opportunity to build on those themes."

Said Pelham Mayor Dave Augustyn of last Thursday's long-range forecast, "I think the kids are probably happy to have some winter."

He noted there haven't been many wintry days so far.

He also tipped his hat to Fenwick Lions Club for hosting the Groundhog Day event each year.

After Flossie made her rounds and said hello to children, the kids got to collect colouring contest prizes and then warm up with hot chocolate and cookies.



LAURA BARTON/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Fenwick Lion Rob Henson directs the children's attention to Flossie's burrow as they wait for the groundhog to emerge for her annual prognostication.

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LOCAL 67

Meditation combines with art



MICHELLE ALLENBERG/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Pelham artist Vanessa Brownbridge paints in her home studio.

MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Postmedia Network

Pelham artist Vanessa Brownbridge wants to show Niagara how creating art in any form can be a path to wellness and meditation.

Brownbridge will host art workshops at Welland Museum starting in February to spread the joy of creativity.

Brownbridge first discovered her love for art when her father died 18 years ago. He had been an artist in Kenya. When he died, Brownbridge felt a need to create something to feel connected to him.

She said the first time she picked up a paintbrush was when she painted a mural in her home after her father's death. She said she wasn't sure if she could paint, but when she was done she was blown away by what she had done.

"The universe had given me a gift that I couldn't even fathom and it was a magical process."

Brownbridge continued to paint, saying art made her feel connected to father and it helped her distress.

Painting became a type of "therapy" for Brownbridge to deal with stress in her life.

As a longtime practitioner of meditation, Brownbridge said painting became another form of meditation for her. When she is connected to her art and moving with the paint, she feels at one with herself. She said she wants to teach others how to get in touch with their playful side and learn to meditate at the same time.

Brownbridge said her workshops will offer a positive environment in which art can be created. The workshops will be about exploring art techniques as well as mindfulness.

The initial workshops run for three months with one session each month. The workshops are on Feb. 18, March 18 and April 22 and run 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. To register and for pricing information contact the museum at 905-732-2215. The class can accommodate about 10 to 15 people, so Brownbridge encourages people sign up well in advance.

MAllenberg@postmedia.com
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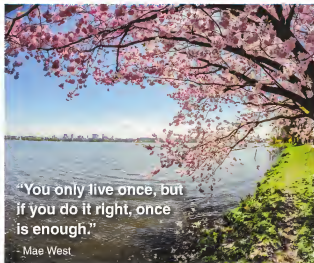
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